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Support for Choctaw-Apache Community of Ebarb petition (#37)

message

Mary Quinn <quinnmary65@yahoo.com>

Fri, Aug 16, 2013 at 12:56 PM

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Ms. Elizabeth Appel

Office of Regulatory Affairs & Collaboration Action - Indian Affairs

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Re: Discussion Draft Rule- 25 CFR 83

I, Mary Janzen Quinn, support the recommendations of the Choctaw-Pache Community of Ebarb (petitioner #37) sent in a letter dated 8/12/2013 from the Chairman and Tribal Council.

*specifically, that the modified 83.6 (d)(1) to require the evidence be viewed "in a light most favorable to the petitioner" makes sense;

*I agree with proposed changes to eliminat Criteria (a), external observers identify the group as "Indian";

*OFA interpretation of "tribes which combined and functioned as a single autonomous political entity" have been overly stringent. The fact that groups have stayed together and maintained an Indian community identity is evidence of their intention to form a political and cultural community with one another. The OFA needs to adopt a more flexible interpretation regarding petitioners that formed in historical times through the combination of tribes and tribal fragments.

*Research and support and advice should be an ongoing obligation of the federal government for groups showing evidence of Indian ancestry, up until the moment of a final decision.

*Potentially affected property owners and economic motivations for ensuring a tribe is never recognized should not have a louder voice than those who know a tribe's history and ethnology.

American Indians have survived in many forms, and it is important to nurture them where they persist. Tribes that have not been federally recongized are not always going to look exactly like tribes that have been federally recongized for hundreds of years, for a variety of reasons. They are not bertter or worse than federally recongized groups, jsut different. The federal government is legally and morally obligation to recognize Indiginous communities' status as indigenous polities that have survived hundreds of years despite assimilationist pressures.

It was my privilege to work alongside Helen Tanner (1916-2011) at the Newberry Library from 1994 to 2008. She has been gone for more than 2 years, but her expert testimony was instrumental in gaining recognition for tribes in her home state of Michigan as well as a many other areas. I cannot make the same type of contributions, but I submit this letter of support in her memory.

Yours truly,

Mary Janzen Quinn
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